



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.	
10/786,043	02/26/2004	Thomas Klotzbuecher	R 305267	3292	
47988	7590	11/25/2009	EXAMINER		
WALTER OTTESEN		PECHE, JORGE O			
PO BOX 4026		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER	
GAITHERSBURG, MD 20885-4026		3664			
		MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE	
		11/25/2009		PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/786,043	KLOTZBUECHER ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jorge O. Peche	3664	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 July 2009.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 11-20 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 11-20 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 12 April 2004 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Receipt is acknowledged of Applicant's argument/remarks filed on July 23, 2009, claims 11-20 are pending and an action on the merits is as follows.

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 11-20 have been fully considered but are moot in view of a new ground(s) of rejection. Applicant has amended claims 11 and 20 and cancelled claims 1-10. The Examiner had withdrawn the rejection of claims 11 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims **11** and **18-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over **Kato et al. (Pub. No.: US 2003/0019278 A1)**.

Regarding **claim 11**, Kato discloses an accelerator pedal apparatus and method for adjusting accelerator pedal apparatus. The methods comprising the steps of:

- Realizing various output value corresponding to the fully closed, opened, and kick-down positions of the accelerator pedal (2) (different operator-controlled

functions) in dependence upon different resilient engaging member (3) constants (the degree of displacement) as different type of forces are applied to the accelerator pedal (2) (operator controlled element) (see page1, par. 5 & 7; page 3, par. 35-36; page 4, par. 44; Figures 1A-1C).

- Actuating accelerator pedal (2) (*actuation of said operation-controlled element*) against the resilient engaging member (3) force (spring force) with two degree of resilient engaging member being characterized by two different resilient engaging member constants (different spring constants) as it is depicted in Figure 1A-1B and 1C-1D respectively. At Figures 1B, the acceleration pedal (2) encounters the natural spring constant (the spring constant is a measure of how stiff the spring is; a force constant) of the resilient engaging member (3) (first spring constant). At Figures 1C-1D, the acceleration pedal (2) encounters a new combined force constant (spring constant); first, the natural spring constant of the resilient engaging member (3) and, second, the resistance of a stepped portion (4b) (a new force constant) (second spring constant) (see page 3, par. 34-37; page 4, par. 38-41; Figures 1A-1D and 2).

- Detecting at least one of the fully closed, opened, or kick-down position of the accelerator pedal (2) (various operator-controlled functions of the operator-controlled element) in dependence upon resilient engaging member constant (quantity which characterizes the spring constant) assigned to the instantaneous degree of resilient engaging member. Figure 1D depicts stop vicinity position for

the accelerator pedal (2) (see page1, par. 5 & 7; page 3, par. 34-36; page 4, par. 44; Figures 1A-1C).

Regarding **claim 18** refers to **claim 11**.

Regarding **claim 19**, Kato teaches a method for detecting at least one of the fully closed, opened, or kick-down position of the accelerator pedal (2) (various operator-controlled functions) in dependence upon resilient engaging member constant assigned to the instantaneous degree of resilient engaging member. In addition, Kato discloses a method for detecting the kick-down position of the accelerator pedal (2) (at least one operator-controlled function) when its signal is detected several times within the kick-down position region (see page1, par. 5 & 7; page 3, par. 35-36; page 4, par. 44; Figures 1A-1C & 2).

Regarding **claim 20**, the arrangement for detecting the actuation of an operation-controlled element is anticipated by the rejected **claim 11**.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims **12-17** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Kato et al. (Pub. No.: US 2003/0019278 A1)** in view of **Kuretake (Patent No.: US 6,293,249 B1)**.

Regarding **claims 12-13**, Kato discloses a method comprising the steps of:

- Detecting a continuous operational angular position of the accelerator pedal (2) (degree of displacement) by utilizing a pedal position measuring means (13) (see page 5, par. 47-48; Figures 2-3).
- Causing the pedal position measuring means (13) to generate a measurement signal in dependence upon a continuous operation angular position of the accelerator pedal (2) (see page 5, par. 47-48; Figures 2-3).

However, Kato's invention fails to disclose a method comprising the steps of determining a time-dependent course of said measurement signal; and, selecting a slope of said time-dependent course of said measurement signal as said quantity characterizing the spring constant; and, detecting said at least one operator-controlled function in dependence upon the slope of said measurement signal.

However, Kuretake teaches a unit for controlling electronically controlled throttle value comprising the step of determining the time dependant course of an amount of depression of acceleration pedal (see col. 6, lines 11-15; col. 7, lines 1-5; Figure 3A).

As Kato teaches a method for calculating and depicting the pedal pressing force and sensor output value in accordance to the pedal position (see page 5, par. 47-48;

Figure 2), and Kuretake teaches a method for calculating and depicting the time dependant course of an amount of depression of acceleration pedal (see col. 6, lines 11-15; col. 7, lines 1-5; Figure 3A), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time was made to convert the pedal position values into a time reference scale as it is implemented in Kuretake's reference by simply calculating how fast the accelerator pedal takes to move from one point to another or how fast its rotational angle change.

Doing so would enhance an accelerator pedal apparatus capable to electronically control a throttle valve.

Furthermore, Kato, in view of Kuretake, teaches a method for detecting a various output values corresponding to the fully closed, opened, and kick-down positions of the accelerator pedal (2) (various operator-controlled functions) in dependence upon a slope of time-dependant, which can be calculated from the accelerator pedal position, of the continuous operational angular position of the accelerator pedal (2) (see page 5, par. 47-48; Figures 2-3).

In addition, Kato, in view of Kuretake, teaches a method for detecting at least one of the various output value corresponding to the fully closed, opened, and kick-down positions of the accelerator pedal (2) (various operator-controlled functions) when the slope of the time-dependent course of the continuous operational angular position of the accelerator pedal (2) lies with in the fully open position and kick-down position range of the continuous operational angular position of the accelerator pedal (2) (pre-given region) (see Figure 2).

Regarding **claim 14**, Kato teaches a fully open - kick-down position region to be defined by a measured and correction values (threshold values) (see page 6, par. 49; Figure 4).

Regarding **claim 15-17**, Kato, in view of Kuretake, teaches a method for selecting a fully open - kick-down position region to be defined by a measured and correction values so that the pedal position signal, which can be converted into a time-dependant scale, changes not only via its angle of rotation (via an automatic reset), but also via the resilient engaging member constant of the accelerator pedal. The spring constant value of the resilient engaging member varies as the applied force on the accelerator pedal (2) changes (see (see page1, par. 5 & 7; page 3, par. 35-36; page 4, par. 44; page 6, par. 49; Figures 1A-1C & 24).

Response to Argument

In the Applicant's arguments filed on July 23, 2009 have been fully considered but are not persuasive.

Regarding Applicant's argument (page 7, par. 4), "The above clearly shows that the spring constant is proportional to the gradient of the pedal pressing force as a function of the pedal position. Such a gradient is nowhere discussed in Kato et al for detecting the operator-controlled function." The Examiner respectfully disagrees; the above description is not in the claim language. Applicant is kindly invited to amend the

claims to include “the gradient of the pedal pressing force as a function of the pedal position.”

Regarding Applicant’s argument (page 7, par. 4 – page 8, par. 1), “In addition, Kato et al just determines an absolute value for the pedal pressing force so that no information is obtained with regard to the underlying spring constant. The absolute value for the pedal pressure at the reference position B or elsewhere could be obtained by different combinations of spring constants such that an unambiguous association between the measured pedal pressure force and a spring constant is not possible in the apparatus of Kato et al.” The Examiner respectfully disagrees; Applicant is kindly invited to view the above new ground of rejection.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jorge O. Peche whose telephone number is (571)270-1339. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 5:30 pm Monday to Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Khoi H. Tran can be reached on 571-272-6919. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jorge O Peche/

Examiner, Art Unit 3664

/KHOI TRAN/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3664